



Interview with Paula Ludwick
Secretary, Deputy Klee
Florence Crane Correctional Facility

1. **When did you go tobacco free?** “I quit smoking February 1, 2008”.
2. **Why did you go tobacco free?** “I stopped smoking because the Department was going tobacco free and it was just the right time to stop”.
3. **How long did you use tobacco products?** “I smoked for thirty three years! It was like a friend that was always there. Smoking was part of my identity. I was twenty when I started; it was in fashion back in the 1980’s. Back then I smoked 3 packs a day. I tried quitting several times and felt like a failure each time. It was good for me what the Department has done with the Tobacco Cessation Initiative.”
4. **What situations were most difficult for you to stop smoking?** “First thing in the morning, with a cup of coffee, after meals, and anytime I got stressed at work. The cravings were pretty bad in the beginning, now they are less and less. Chewing gum sure helps! I had mood swings the first couple of months but it does get easier overtime. I took a lot of warm baths, watched lots of movies, and kept myself real busy. This helped a lot! I used smoking to reward myself, but not any longer”.
5. **What/who helped you quit.** “I helped myself quit because I am a *very determined* person. This time I am very committed. Sure I gained weight but I did not worry about it this time. My kids and fiancé put up with my crankiness and still loved me and were supportive of my quitting. I took Chantix, (a prescription smoking cessation product) but stopped after 10 weeks due to the side effects”.
6. **What has your life been like since you stopped using tobacco products?** “I feel a sense of accomplishment. I have saved a lot of money which I have used to buy new clothes and to remodel my house. I am a lot more active, as well, joined a gym, and I don’t suffer from allergies or headaches anymore. I feel stronger emotionally, and more peaceful”.
7. **What is a message for those trying to stop?** “*I want to be a good role model for other co-workers who are trying to quit. It’s a cliché, but don’t quit trying to quit. I smoked for over thirty years, but I finally did it, so can you!*”

By Rosanne Leland
MDOC – Work Life Coordinator